

MINUTES
City Council Meeting
Monday, May 18, 2015 – 7:00 p.m.

Call to Order: Mayor Holder welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Opening: Mayor Pro-tem George offered the opening prayer and Mayor Holder invited everyone to join in the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Roll Call:

Council Members: Mayor Holder presided. Mayor Pro-tem George, Don Bethune, Bruce Campbell, Rosetta Cody, Marcia Daniel, and Kim Tice.

Staff: Ron Feldner, Interim City Manager; Rhonda Ferrell-Bowles, Clerk of Council; James P. Gerard, City Attorney; Ben Brengman, IT Director; Ron Alexander, Building Safety Director; Blake Hodge, Fire Chief and Charles Draeger, Water Operations Director. Absent: Pam Franklin, HR Director; David Lyons, Chief of Police; Benny Gooze, Public Works Director and Cliff Ducey, Parks & Recreation Director.

Mayor Holder said City Council held a pre-agenda session prior to tonight's meeting. He said no decisions were made during the pre-agenda session.

Informal Public Comment: Mayor Holder opened the floor to receive public comment from the audience.

Reverend Gary Monroe, Hawkinsville Road, said I see where the City posted the City's 50th Anniversary Book on the website. He said the book has some good information. He said I would like to request that the City locate the book on the front page of the website so it is easily accessible to everyone.

There being no further questions or comments, Mayor Holder closed informal public comment portion of the meeting.

Formal Public Comment:

Mayor Holder introduced Mr. WH Gross, WH Gross Construction Company who conducted an informational presentation on a proposed apartment development to be located at Town Center.

Mayor Holder called for questions or comments from the audience.

Reverend Gary Monroe said the City needs to do its due diligence on this type of place in this location. He said not only do we want it to benefit the senior citizens, but also grow Garden City. He said I don't believe this area is conducive for that type of place. He said there is little medical attention in the area as well as for daily necessities of life. He said the senior citizens would have to travel a distance for these. He said I feel City Council needs to take into consideration the area that is to be developed. He said I don't want to see a ready fire aim approach.

Mr. Monroe asked if this is an exclusive agreement that the City has entered into with Mr. Gross.

City Manager said there were RFP's and we received five proposals and it was determined that WH Gross Construction Company was the best suited. He said we have an arrangement with Mr. Gross to work with the City for the June 2015 DCA submittal and June 2016.

City Attorney said we do not have an agreement with Mr. Gross at this time.

Mr. Monroe said I believe the area would be good for a residential neighborhood like South Bridge.

Councilmember Bethune said what is the average rent? Mr. Gross replied from \$500 to \$700 per month.

Councilmember Bethune said the seniors are constantly asking me about an apartment complex for seniors, because they are in good health, but don't want to have the maintenance of a yard and the upkeep of a house. He said as we move forward we will be getting more input from our citizens.

Councilmember Bethune said how much are the average utilities? Mr. Gross said on average our water/sewer customer uses an average of 40 to 50 gallons per day so the cost is low. He said also we use a lot of spray foam insulation that cuts down on electric costs.

Mayor Pro-tem George said we have been working on this for three or four months. He said the City still owns the property.

Mr. Gross said funds are awarded every year from the State of Georgia. He said how a community is chosen is based on how well the project scores. He said the scoring criteria consists of such things as the proximity of a bus stop and grocery store. He said a good start is the City having a comprehensive plan, because a lot of the scoring criteria is address in the comprehensive plan.

Mr. Monroe said we can't keep doing ready fire aim. He said everything needs to be in place first such as a bus stop and grocery store before you move forward.

Public Hearing:

PC1509, Rezoning Request: Mayor Holder opened the public hearing to receive public comment on a request by Suzanne Cooler representing property owner Chatham County, to rezone 0 Travis Field Road, from RA to I-2 to make land use compatible with adjacent industrial use. (PIN No. 6-0924-05-013; 6-0924-05-014; 6-0924-05-015; & 6-0924-05-016).

Planning, Zoning & Building Director presented an overview of the propose rezoning. He said the Planning Commission at their May 12th meeting recommended approval of the rezoning. He said there was one planning commission member who opposed the rezoning.

Councilmember Bethune said the request is to rezone the property to I-2, but it abuts residential property. He said what sort of buffer is required.

Planning, Zoning & Building Director said in this case there is an 80 foot railroad running between the two properties.

City Attorney said if the railroad is between the two pieces of property then they are adjacent.

Councilmember Bethune said the future zoning map shows the property zoned as I-2 and the rest of the property as commercial. He said wouldn't you rezone the property because it is compatible to the area.

Councilmember Tice asked if the rezoning would change the flood zone. Planning, Zoning & Building Director said we can't change the flood zone.

City Attorney said our ordinance requires a buffer where it abuts residential. He said the railroad property doesn't have anything to do with it.

Mayor Pro-tem George said I just want to make sure there is a buffer.

Ms. Suzanne Cooler said Chatham County owns the property and is requesting the property to be rezoned so it can be sold. She said CenterPoint and SEDA are looking at the property. She said we chose the I-2 zoning, because the property is adjacent to CenterPoint.

Mayor Holder said we shouldn't be concerned with the buffer tonight. He said we need to focus on the rezoning.

Planning, Zoning & Building Director said when it comes back before the Planning Commission the quality of life details would be discussed.

Mayor Pro-tem George said how long has the County owned the property? Ms. Cooler said since 2010.

Mayor Holder asked if there was anyone who wished to speak against the rezoning.

Ms. Patricia Burgess said my property abuts this property. She said my family has lived there for sixty-five years. She said the properties that you all have rezoned adjacent to my property nothing promised has been follow through with. She said the buffers aren't done right, the noise ordinance isn't enforced, my property floods and you say taxes will not go up, but they will. She said we have worked with the City in the past, but you drop us once the rezoning is approved.

Councilmember Bethune asked if the ditches drain in the area.

City Manager said I will talk with Benny tomorrow and get them working any drainage issues.

Ms. Burgess said I just want you all to protect me. She said we are used to the noise. She said we just feel we should be protected.

Mayor Pro-tem George said I would like to stop by and let you show me what you are talking about. He said as far as taxes I will fight it if it goes higher than 4 mills.

Councilmember Tice asked the City Manager if he could check on the runoff to see what is going on.

There being no further questions or comments, Mayor Holder closed the public hearing.

City Council Minutes: Upon motion by Councilmember Campbell, seconded by Councilmember George, City Council voted unanimously to approve the city council minutes dated 5/4/15 and workshop synopsis dated 5/11/15.

Staff Reports:

Planning, Zoning & Building Director presented the Planning, Zoning & Building Department's Monthly Status Report.

Councilmember Bethune said containers and trucks are being parked at fueling station. He said is there anything that we can do.

Planning, Zoning & Building Director said Garden City is an old City and some business are grandfathered in follow the rules that applied at the time.

Councilmember Bethune said we can't find a permitting process that will address this issue.

Councilmember Bethune said where are we on the storage pod ordinance?

Planning, Zoning & Building Director said Jim and I are still working on finalizing the ordinance.

Councilmember Bethune said there is a construction container that has been sitting in front of the house on Rommel for six or seven months. He said the owner is out of state, but we should be able to issue a subpoena to him, because this has been going on for months.

City Attorney said the person has to have due process and given a chance to correct the problem before issuing a subpoena to appear in court.

IT Director presented the Information Technology Department's Monthly Status Report. IT Director said another computer training class for seniors is planned for this Thursday at 1:00 p.m. at the senior center. He said we will be looking at doing something at the Cooper Center when the kids get out of school.

Water Operations Director presented the Water Operations Department Monthly Status Report. He said I would like to ask everyone to be patient with the work going on to repair the sewer cave-in on Rommel Avenue.

Councilmember Tice said your report states there were 83 rereads for the month. Water Operations Director said these are city initiated rereads not customer initiated rereads. He said if something doesn't look right with the reading we initiate the reread.

Captain Ballard presented the Police Department's Monthly Status Report.

Mayor Pro-tem George said I would like to thank you all for including the top five violations by district.

Councilmember Tice thanked the police department for coming to the senior center to talk with the seniors about crime related matters.

Councilmember Bethune said I am pleased to see the officers stopping the trucks for not being in the proper lane. He said I have also gotten several positive comments from residents about increased patrol by officers.

Fire Chief presented the Fire Department's Monthly Status Report. He said we had our ISO inspection the first week in April. He said we should be getting the results soon. He said we welcomed two new firefighters in April and also have a couple of new volunteers.

City Manager Updates: City Manager said we are working on a schedule to have different department heads go to the Senior Center and Cooper Center on a regular basis to get staff more engaged with the citizens.

Items for Consideration:

First Reading, Ordinance - Zoning Map Amendment (310 & 312 Main St.): Mayor Holder read an ordinance to amend the zoning ordinance and map of Garden City, Georgia, as amended; to rezone certain property owned by Virginia S. Mock and Omega Properties & Investments, Inc., from its present zoning classification of C-2A to I-1 zoning classification; to repeal all ordinances in conflict herewith; to provide an effective date; and for other purposes.

Councilmember Bethune made a motion to deny the ordinance on the first reading, seconded by Councilmember Tice.

Councilmember Bethune said this property is located in a position that many residents and visitors see coming into the City and I-1 zoning is not the proper zoning.

Mayor Pro-tem George said was all the neighboring property owners notified of the proposed rezoning. Planning, Zoning & Building Director replied yes. Mayor Pro-tem Georgia said were any against the rezoning. Planning, Zoning & Building Director said there was not opposition.

Councilmember Campbell said they wanting to rezone the property to put a truck repair shop. He said the property sets in a hole sort of under the freeway. He said if you deny the request what would you do with the property?

Mayor Pro-tem said there is already a trucking company at the opposite end of the highway.

Mayor Holder said we have a motion and a second to deny the ordinance on the first reading. He asked the Clerk of Council perform a roll call vote for the record.

Mayor Holder – Favor

Mayor Pro-tem George – Opposed

Councilmember Bethune – Favor

Councilmember Campbell – Opposed

Councilmember Cody – Opposed

Councilmember Daniel – Favor

Councilmember Tice – Favor

Mayor Holder said the motion carries to deny the ordinance on the first reading by a vote of four in favor with three opposed.

Resolution, CORE MPO MOU: Mayor Holder read a resolution authorizing the City of Garden City to enter into a memorandum of understanding to evidence the City's participation as a member in the Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO); authorizing the City's City Manager to execute the memorandum; and for other purposes.

City Manager said this is a result for the expansion of the Metropolitan Planning Organization. He said the MPO came up with finding a formula based on population for figuring the annual membership payment. He said the city's annual membership payment will be approximately \$7,000.

Upon motion by Councilmember Bethune, seconded by Councilmember George, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the resolution.

Resolution, Classifying (6) Police Vehicles as Surplus: A resolution by the Mayor and Council of Garden City, Georgia, to classify as surplus property six (6) police vehicles that no longer serve any public purpose by reason of their multiple mechanical issues necessitating excessive repair costs.

Upon motion by Councilmember Tice, seconded by Councilmember Cody, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the resolution.

Adjournment: Upon motion by Councilmember Bethune, seconded by Councilmember Campbell, City Council adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Transcribed by Clerk of Council

Accepted & Approved by Council: 6-1-15